United Nations S/PV.7125

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7125th meeting
Monday, 3 March 2014, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Lucas	(Luxembourg)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Ms. Paik Ji-ah
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fernandez-Taranco.

Mr. Fernandez-Taranco: Since the briefing by the Deputy Secretary-General to the Security Council on 1 March 2014 (see S/PV.7124), the situation in Ukraine has continued to evolve rapidly. We understand that there is a continuing build-up of Russian troops in Crimea and that a number of Ukrainian military bases have been surrounded by Russian troops. In addition, the situation in eastern Ukraine remains fluid, with reports of demonstrations in certain cities and attempts by local groups to seize control of some official buildings.

On Sunday, 2 March, Ukraine's Parliament urged Russia to fulfil immediately the terms of the agreement on its Black Sea fleet's temporary presence in Ukraine's territory and called for the rapid withdrawal of Russian troops to their bases. The Russian position on events was articulated by Foreign Minister Lavrov in remarks made today in the Human Rights Council. Foreign Minister Lavrov stated that Russia's actions in relation to Ukraine were "a question of defending our citizens and compatriots and ensuring human rights".

The Secretary-General has remained closely engaged on the situation in Ukraine. In the latest telephone conversation with President Putin over the weekend, on 1 March, the Secretary-General told him that he was closely following the serious and rapidly unfolding developments in Ukraine. The Secretary-General expressed grave concern about the continuing tense situation that could compromise the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. He reiterated that it was critical to restore calm and proceed to an immediate de-escalation of the situation and asked for cool heads to prevail. The Secretary-General appealed to President Putin to urgently engage in direct dialogue with the authorities in Kyiv.

As members of the Council know, the Secretary-General has repeated emphasized that it is critical that full respect for and preservation of Ukraine's independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity be ensured. He has underscored the utmost importance of restoring calm in order to de-escalate tensions immediately through dialogue. He has stressed that, in the spirit of the United Nations Charter, we should all adhere to the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Following the Security Council's consultation on Saturday and given the developments on the ground in Ukraine, the Secretary-General asked Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson to travel to Ukraine on Sunday. While in Ukraine, the Deputy Secretary-General will be personally apprised of the facts on the ground and will subsequently brief the Secretary-General on the next steps the United Nations could take to support the de-escalation of the situation. The Deputy Secretary-General arrived in Kyiv today and has already begun his meetings. Robert Serry, who briefed the Secretary-General yesterday in Geneva on his recent mission to Ukraine, joined Mr. Eliasson in Kyiv today.

Over the past 48 hours, the Secretary-General has spoken to a number of key people, including Prime Minister Cameron, President Hollande, President Putin, European Union High Representative Ashton and the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Burkhalter, as well as OSCE Secretary General Zannier. He also met with Foreign Minister Lavrov today in Geneva. In all these calls and meetings, the Secretary-General reiterated the urgent need for coordination in support of a stable and united Ukraine.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the Secretary-General's call for dialogue to de-escalate the tensions immediately. As the Secretary-General has underscored in his calls to world leaders, all of us share the urgent responsibility to assist in finding a peaceful resolution in a collaborative effort.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation initiated the convening of today's meeting of the Security Council because events in our brotherly neighbour Ukraine raise deep concerns for us. The crisis provoked by the State coup in Kyiv as a result of the armed takeover by radical extremists continues to deteriorate and generate very serious threats to the future of that country.

Today in Geneva our Minister for Foreign Affairs Lavrov spoke in detail about the situation in Ukraine. We are convinced that any internal crisis must be overcome through a dialogue held among all political forces and ethnic and denominational groups in a constititional framework and in accordance with international obligations, including most importantly those related to international humanitarian law, in defence of human rights and the rights of national minorities.

We must decisively sideline those extremists seeking to take control of the situation through illegal methods, violence and open terror. We all know who unleashed the crisis in Ukraine. By disputing the unequivocally legal actions of the legitimate authorities, some of our partners have chosen to support anti-Government statements and encouraged participants to move to forceful aggression by capturing and setting fire to administrative buildings, attacking the police, stealing from warehouses, mocking regional officials and launching crude attacks against churches. The centre of Kyiv and many towns in western Ukraine have been overrun by armed national radicals chanting extremist anti-Russian and anti-Semitic slogans.

On 21 February, almost three months after the onset of the unrest and excesses, an agreement was reached between the President of Ukraine and the opposition. It was signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Germany, France and Poland. The authorities have refused to declare a state of emergency. They have removed the law authorities from the streets. The opposition has done nothing. They have not surrendered their illegal weapons. The civic buildings and streets of Kyiv have not been restored to order. The radicals continue to control the towns.

Instead of the promised establishment of a Government of national unity, a so-called Government of victors has been formed. The Parliament of Ukraine took a decision limiting the language rights of minorities; they have disbanded the judges of the Constitutional Court and insisted on their criminal prosecution. Demands have been made to limit or criminalize the use of the Russian language, to ban undesirable political parties and to make examples of them. The victors wish to exploit the fruits of their victory to trample the rights and basic freedoms of the people.

All of this has alarmed the authorities of eastern and southern Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, home to millions of Russians who do not wish to see such developments in their regions. In a situation of ongoing threats of violence by ultranationalists against the security, lives and legitimate interests of Russians and all Russian-speaking peoples, popular self-defence brigades have been established. They have already put down attempts to take over administrative buildings in Crimea by force and to funnel weapons and ammunition into the peninsula. We have information about the preparation of new provocations, including against the Russian Black Sea fleet in Ukraine.

In such circumstances, the legitimately elected authorities of the Republic have asked the President of Russia to help them to restore calm in Crimea. Such assistance is entirely legitimate under Russian law, given the extraordinary situation in Ukraine and the threat posed to Russian citizens, our compatriots, and the Black Sea fleet of the Russian Federation in Ukraine. The President of Russia therefore went before the Federation Council to request that the Russian armed forces be permitted to deploy in the territory of Ukraine until the civic and political situation there has been normalized. On 1 March, the Federation Council supported that appeal, which we hope will sideline the radicals. I repeat, the issue is one of defending our citizens and compatriots, as well as the most import human right — the right to life.

Today, I am also authorized to say that the President of Russia has received the following request from President Yanukovich:

> "As the legitimately elected President of Ukraine, I wish to inform you that events in my country and capital have placed Ukraine on the brink of civil war. Chaos and anarchy reign throughout the country. The lives, security and rights of the people, particularly in the south-east and in Crimea, are under threat. Open acts

> of terror and violence are being committed under the influence of Western countries. People are being persecuted on the basis of their language and political beliefs. I therefore call on President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia to use the armed forces of the Russian Federation to establish legitimacy, peace, law and order and stability in defence of the people of Ukraine."

The letter is signed by President Yanukovich and dated 1 March. For all who may wish to see it, I have with me a photocopy of the original letter from the President of Ukraine to the President of Russia.

Those who seek to interpret this situation as a form of aggression and are threatening sanctions and boycotts of all kinds are the very partners who have consistently encouraged political forces close to them to engage in ultimatums, to reject dialogue, to ignore the concerns of southern and eastern Ukraine, and ultimately to polarize Ukrainian society. We call on them to adopt a responsible approach, to set aside geopolitical calculations and to place the interests of the Ukrainian people above all else. The obligations undertaken in the 21 February agreement, including the launch of a constitutional reform process with the participation and full consideration of the opinions of all regions of Ukraine, must be honoured, and their outcome submitted for approval in a national referendum, as well as the establishment of a legitimate Government of national unity that takes the interests of all political forces and regions of Ukraine into account.

The Russian position has been and remains consistent and open. While the Ukraine is merely a geopolitical playground for some Western politicians, for us it is a brotherly country to which we are bound by many centuries of common history. Russia is interested in a stable and strong Ukraine where the legitimate rights and interests of the Ukrainians, our compatriots and all citizens are protected. In this extraordinary situation, which is not of our making and in which the lives and security of the inhabitants of Crimea and south-eastern Ukraine are under genuine threat from the irresponsible and provocative acts of gangs and ultranationalist elements, we emphasize once again that Russia's actions are entirely appropriate and legitimate.

Ms. Power (United States of America): Listening to the representative of Russia, one might think that Moscow had just become the rapid response arm of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. So many of the assertions made this afternoon by the representative of the Russian Federation are without basis in reality. Let us begin with a clear and candid assessment of the facts.

It is a fact that Russian military forces have taken over Ukrainian border posts. It is a fact that Russia has taken over the ferry terminal in Kerch. It is a fact that Russian ships are moving in and around Sevastopol. It is a fact that Russian forces are blocking the mobile telephone services in some areas. It is a fact that Russia has surrounded or taken over practically all Ukrainian military facilities in Crimea. It is a fact that, today, Russian jets entered Ukrainian airspace. It is also a fact that independent journalists continue to report that there is no evidence of violence against Russian or pro-Russian communities.

Russian military action is not a human rights protection mission. It is a violation of international law and of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the independent nation of Ukraine and a breach of Russia's Helsinki commitments and its United Nations obligations. The central issue is whether the recent change of Government in Ukraine constitutes a danger to Russia's legitimate interests of such a nature and extent that Russia is justified in intervening militarily in Ukraine, seizing control of public facilities and issuing military ultimatums to elements of the Ukrainian military.

The answer of course is no. The Russian military are secure. The new Government in Kyiv has pledged to honour all of its existing international agreements, including those covering Russian bases. Russian mobilization is a response to an imaginary threat.

A second issue is whether the population of Crimea or other parts of eastern Ukraine are at risk because of the new Government. There is no evidence of that. Military action cannot be justified on the basis of threats that have not been made and are not being carried out. There is no evidence, for example, that churches in eastern Ukraine are being or will be attacked. The allegation is without basis. There is no evidence that ethnic Russians are in danger. On the contrary, the new Ukrainian Government has placed a priority on internal reconciliation and political inclusivity.

Acting President Turchynov has made clear his opposition to any restriction on the use of the Russian tongue. No one has to explain to Ukraine's new Government the need to have open communications not only with leaders of the country's Russian ethnic

majority in the Crimea and elsewhere but also with its neighbours. That is why, when the current crisis began, the Government sent its former chief of defence to the region to try to defuse the situation. A second emissary was prevented from entering the Crimean Verkhovna Rada to engage in discussions. It is why the Ukrainian authorities have repeatedly reached out to Russia. Russia needs to reciprocate and to begin to engage directly with the Government of Ukraine.

I note that Russia has implied a right to take military action in the Crimea if invited to do so by the Prime Minister of Crimea. As the Government of Russia well knows, that has no legal basis. The prohibition on the use of force would be rendered moot were subnational authorities able to unilaterally invite military intervention by a neighbouring State. Under the Ukrainian Constitution, only the Ukrainian Rada can approve the presence of foreign troops.

If we are concerned about the rights of the Russian-speaking minorities, the United States is prepared to work with Russia and the Council to protect them. We have proposed and wholeheartedly support the immediate deployment of international observers and monitors from the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to ensure that the people about whom Russia expresses such concern are protected from abuse and to elucidate for the world the facts on the ground. The solution to the crisis is not difficult to envision. There is a way out, and that is through direct and immediate dialogue by Russia with the Government of Ukraine, the immediate pull-back of Russia's military forces, the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and the urgent deployment of observers and human rights monitors, not through more threats and more distortions.

Tonight, the OSCE will begin deploying monitors to Ukraine. Those monitors can provide neutral and needed assessments of the situation on the ground. Their presence is urgently necessary in Crimea and in key cities in eastern Ukraine. The United States calls upon Russia to ensure that their access is not impeded.

The leadership in Moscow may well be unhappy about former President Yanukovych's decision to flee Ukraine and move in with them. Russia may be displeased with the new Government, which was approved by Ukraine's Parliament by an overwhelming majority, including members of Yanukovych's own party. Russia has every right to wish that events in Ukraine had turned out differently but it does not have the right to express that unhappiness by using military force or by trying to convince the world community that up is down and black is white.

Russia's calls to turn back time so as to implement the 21 February agreement ring hollow. It was Yanukovych who failed to abide by the terms of that agreement, fleeing Kyiv and ultimately Ukraine. The United States categorically rejects the notion that the new Government of Ukraine is a Government of victors. It is a Government of the people and one that intends to sheppard the country on 25 May towards democratic elections that would allow Ukrainians who would prefer a different leadership to have their views heard. The United States will stand strongly and proudly with the people of Ukraine as they chart out their own destiny, their own Government and their own future.

The bottom line is that for all of the self-serving rhetoric that we have heard from Russian officials in recent days, there is nothing that justifies the Russian conduct. As I said at our last meeting (see S/PV.7124), Russia's actions speak much louder than its words. What is happening today is not a human rights protection mission or a consensual intervention. What is happening today is a dangerous military intevention in Ukraine. It is an act of aggression. It must stop. That is a choice for Russia. Diplomacy can serve Russia's interests. The world is speaking out against the use of military threats and force. Ukrainians must be allowed to determine their own destiny.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): As I said, during the consultations on Saturday, there is a prevailing feeling of consternation when we see what is happening in Ukraine and when we hear what our Russian colleague has just said. It is in fact the voice of the past that we have just heard. I was 15 years old in August 1968, when the Soviet forces entered Czechoslovakia. We heard the same justifications, the same documents being flaunted and the same allegations. We hoped that, with the building of Europe and the collapse of communism, we would awaken from such nightmares. We had hoped that we would have replaced the dangerous logic of the balance of power with cooperation in respect for the identity and the independence of each.

Now we are brought back to a world where force prevails over the law, where every crisis must have a victor and a vanquished, and where propaganda denies the reality. Let us first recall the facts that no

manipulation can hide in the age of television and the Internet.

The facts are straightforward. The Russian army is occupyirg Crimea, Ukrainian territory, against the will of the Ukrainian Government and in violation of international law. The reasons invoked are blatant untruths. No one is killing anyone in the streets of Kyiv today. No one is threatening the Russian-speaking populations in Crimea or elsewhere. Those are only excuses, which even those voicing them cannot believe, so crude they are.

By occupying Crimea, Russia has taken a territorial bet. The goal is clear — to bring the authorities of Kyiv to heel, to bring them back into the sphere of influence of Moscow and to remind them that their sovereignty is limited, as Mr. Brezhnev once said after invading Czechoslovakia. In short, Russia is taking Europe back 40 years. It is all there: the practice and the Soviet rhetoric, the brutality and the propaganda.

France does not want to play this ridiculous game, which does not serve the interests of anyone, and certainly not the Ukrainian and Russian people. That is why, at the very beginning of the crisis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, along with his German and Polish colleagues, went there to negotiate an agreement, which Russia has refused to endorse until now, only to invoke it today.

When events — the President's flight and the Parliament's about-face — made it impossible for the agreement to be implemented, France continued to defend its spirit — reconciliation through the formation a Government of national unity and the holding of elections under international supervision. That is what is being proposed today by the Prime Minister, who is being stymied by the refusal of the Party of Regions to join the Government. That is what the acting President is seeking; he has refused to sign a law that, rashly and unfortunately, diminished the role of the Russian language.

In line with the position of seeking a reasonable solution that respects everyone's interests and sensitivities in the framework of Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity, there are six points that should be the basis for putting an end to the crisis. These six simple points should be accepted by all parties who respect international law: first, the return of Russian armed forces to their bases, verified by international observers; secondly, the immediate cantonment, disarmament and dissolution of paramilitary elements and other groups with illegal weapons, monitored by international observers; thirdly, the Ukrainian Parliament's re-establishment of the law on regional languages; fourthly, the establishment of a high council for the protection of minorities; fifthly, the implementation of constitutional reforms; and sixthly, the organization of presidential elections on 25 May under the aegis of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). These are simple principles, the implementation of which international mediation should be able to negotiate with all the parties concerned. The Secretary-General of our Organization, together with the European Union and the OSCE, has a central role to play in that area.

But let there be no mistake — the will to find a negotiated solution that meets the requirements of international law, safeguards the rights of all Ukrainians, and makes it possible to stabilize a democratic and unified Ukraine in its regional context, cannot accommodate the persistent violations of international law perpetrated by Russia. France wants to cooperate with Russia, with which we have a long common history, but not at any price and not in violation of our principles and values.

The denial of reality, the scorn for international law and the renunciation of any discourse that protects national sovereignty that we have heard today do not inspire optimism. Russia seems to be returning to its old ghosts, playing outmoded roles in an outdated setting on the stage of a bankrupt theatre. If it continues to misread the mindset of the new times and to place more trust in force than in dialogue, it is with regret but with determination that France, with its European partners, will draw consequences in its relations with Russia. Russia alone would be responsible for that setback. France, its partners and the international community as a whole ask only for respect for international law and Ukrainian sovereignty, which Russia is clearly and brutally violating.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The pretense is now over. The world can see that Russian military forces have taken control of the Crimean peninsula, part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine. That action is against the express wishes of the legitimate Ukrainian Government. It is a clear and unambiguous violation of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and is a flagrant breach of international law.

We can see absolutely no justification for those actions. We have heard from Russia that their forces are in Ukraine to protect minorities from armed radicals and anti-Semites. We hear claims of interference in the affairs of the Orthodox Church. We hear claims of hundreds of thousands of refugees. But Russia has provided no evidence of any of that. It is clear that the claims have simply been fabricated to justify Russian military action.

In assuming control of a sovereign part of Ukraine on a trumped-up pretext, the Russian Federation has contravened its obligations as a member of the international community. It has violated Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. It has failed to honour its international commitments as a founding member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and as a signatory to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. It has reneged on its obligations under the 1997 bilateral Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Russia and Ukraine and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum.

The Russian representative claims that Mr. Yanukovych has called for Russian military intervention. We are talking about a former leader who abandoned his office, his capital and his country; whose corrupt governance brought his country to the brink of economic ruin; who suppressed protests against his Government leading to over 80 deaths; and whose own party has abandoned him. The idea that his pronouncements now convey any legitimacy whatsoever is far-fetched and in keeping with the rest of Russia's bogus justification for its actions. The Government in Kyiv is legitimate and has been overwhelmingly endorsed by the Ukrainian Parliament.

In the twenty-first century, no country should be acting with such blatant disregard for international law. Those actions will be met with a strong and united response from the international community. Russia should not be surprised that its political and economic reputation have already suffered. The ruble has fallen and the Russian stock market is now down more than 10 per cent.

Just as we condemn the Russian Federation for its confrontational acts, we commend the Government of Ukraine for refusing to rise to provocation. That is a wise decision. We urge the Ukrainian Government to continue to act calmly and to avoid actions or rhetoric that would inflame tensions or provide a further pretext for further military action.

We call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease all military action in Crimea and to refrain from any interference elsewhere in Ukraine. Russia should withdraw its forces to their bases and return to force levels previously agreed with the Government of Ukraine, as part of the Black Sea Fleet basing arrangements.

If Russia is genuinely concerned about protecting minority groups and upholding the human rights of Ukrainian citizens, then armed intervention is not the way to address those concerns. Instead, Russia should open up a direct dialogue with the Ukrainian Government in Kyiv and not simply pick and choose individuals with whom it wishes to engage. It should respond to requests by Ukraine and other signatories of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum to hold consultations, as specified by paragraph 6 of that Memorandum. It should engage constructively in the debate taking place in the OSCE and other institutions concerning the deployment of a fact-finding mission and an international observer mission to Ukraine. Such a mission could establish the real facts on the ground, monitor the situation and, indeed, provide any necessary reassurances and guarantees through peaceful means.

We welcome the Secretary-General's decision to send the Deputy-Secretary-General to Kyiv today. I hope that he will also go to the Crimea and eastern Ukraine. We call on the Secretary-General to use his good offices to their fullest extent to help to de-escalate the current situation.

This is not 1968 or 1956. The era in which one country can suppress democratization in a neighbouring State through military intervention on the basis of transparently trumped-up pretexts is over.

We stand ready to work with Ukraine, Russia and all our international partners to support a stable, united, inclusive and economically prosperous Ukraine. The United Kingdom urges Russia to uphold its obligations under international law, including under the Charter of the United Nations; to act in a way that promotes stability, rather than to destabilize the region through the promotion of new frozen conflicts; and to support democratic processes and the rule of law, not to subvert or suppress them.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Lithuania strongly condemns the clear violation by the Russian Federation

of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The military actions we are witnessing on Crimean soil defy the fundamental principles of international law, the Helsinki Final Act, the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Russia and Ukraine of 1997, and the legal framework regulating the presence of the Russian Black Sea fleet in Crimea. This blatant breach of the Charter of the United Nations has no place in the twenty-first century, and for too many in our part of the world evokes the memories of the darkest pages of the twentieth century. It is a threat to international peace, security and stability, and must be qualified clearly as such.

Such violations of international law must also entail international responsibility. Nothing — none of the events — in Ukraine merits a military invasion such as we are witnessing from the Russian side. The will of the Ukrainian people to pursue a path of democratic transformations and rebuild the rule of law in their country must be respected. We call on the Russian Federation to withdraw its forces back to their permanent bases and to refrain from any further intervention or interference in Ukraine. osc

Let me stress that the international community has a wide array of instruments that can and must be used to resolve existing differences and de-escalate the situation through political dialogue and consultations, especially as all of the major regional and international organizations — the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and others — are offering their mediation and good offices to this effect. The presence of Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson and OSCE representatives on the ground testify clearly to that.

We welcome the proposal of the OSCE to send a monitoring mission to Crimea and other regions of Ukraine. We urge the Russian Federation to respond positively.

In the light of the international efforts, Russia cannot continue forging ahead with military invasion, especially as Ukraine has repeatedly offered consultations with Russian counterparts. Consultation mechanisms are also foreseen in the Budapest Memorandum and must be used to de-escalate the situation. All of these avenues should be utilized with a sense of great urgency, including through bilateral contacts, to move away from the brink of war.

We stress once against the inadmissibility of the threat or use of force in international relations. We call on the international community to stand united in support of Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Efforts to destabilize the situation, as well as to stoke radical action and separatism in Crimea and elsewhere in Ukraine, are highly dangerous. We commend the restraint shown by the new Government of Ukraine and its determination not to give in to provocation.

We support the efforts of the Secretary-General to defuse the crisis and welcome the proposals, as I said before, to send monitoring missions. We would welcome any other bodies and missions that may help to ease the situation. We urge the Russian Federation to respond to these efforts and to seize the opportunity before it is too late.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): The situation in Ukraine, in particular the Crimea, is alarming and may pose a threat to international peace and security. We stress the need for all international actors to respect the Charter of the United Nations and resolve their disputes in conformity with existing bilateral and multilateral agreements. We therefore strongly urge all parties and stakeholders in the Ukrainian crisis to exercise extreme restraint in order to de-escalate the tensions. We further call for an inclusive political dialogue acknowledging the diversity of Ukrainian society and ensuring the protection of ethnic minorities, including the Russian community.

Given the current situation, we believe more than ever that the United Nations has a critical role to play. We welcome the visit of Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson to Kyiv in an effort to find a diplomatic and political solution to the Ukrainian crisis. We also welcome initiatives of several capitals, including the visits today by both the United States Secretary of State and the United Kingdom Foreign Secretary to Kyiv, as well as the efforts of the President of the Swiss Confederation, in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to convene a meeting of the international contact group on Ukraine.

However, given the complexity and fragility of the situation on the ground, we believe that it is important to harmonize all of these international efforts. We therefore reiterate the proposal we made in closed consultations on Saturday to establish a quartet for Ukraine, to be convened by the Secretary-General and

composed of the United Nations, the European Union, the OSCE and the Russian Federation. We believe that only the concerted and harmonized efforts of the main stakeholders, aimed at ensuring the respect of the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, while considering the interests of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, would provide a lasting solution to this crisis.

As the world is commemorating the centenary of the Great War, let me conclude by hoping that all international actors have learned the lessons of that War and its consequences for the European continent. Although Rwanda is geographically remote from Ukraine, we fear that the current tension, if not well handled, could bring the entire planet back to the darkness of history, aggravated by the increased military and nuclear capabilities of the world's Powers.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Jordan wishes to express its deep concern regarding the unfolding developments in Ukraine, in particular in the Crimean region. We call on all parties to exercise calm and self-restraint and not to further escalate the situation by taking military measures or by threatening the use of force.

Jordan reaffirms the need to respect the sovereignty of Ukraine, its territorial integrity and its political independence. We reaffirm the prohibition of the use of force on its territory, or any part thereof, and of the occupation thereof, including the Crimean region. Jordan calls on all States concerned to respect the terms of their agreements and treaties with Ukraine. In this regard, we reaffirm the need to adhere to the provisions of the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation of 1997.

Russia and Ukraine must embark on serious and effective dialogue. This dialogue should lead to the return of the Crimean region to Ukrainian control as soon as possible. We call on Ukraine to take immediate steps to resolve the causes of tension, both internally and externally, and to respect human rights, in particular of minority groups, and to revoke any measures that have been taken which may undermine such rights. At the same time, we stress the need to refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine so that the country may decide its political future for itself.

The Security Council must assume its responsibilities regarding the situation currently prevailing in Ukraine. We support the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General and Mr. Serry, and their contacts with the various parties in this regard.

We wish to receive further clarification from the parties concerned regarding the situation on the ground, and in the Crimean region in particular. This would help the Security Council to address the situation accordingly. We note the need for the Security Council to investigate the crisis in the Crimean region, to look into mediation and dispute settlement mechanisms that could be used in the light of the information provided, and to assess whether an active act of aggression is being committed on Ukrainian territory.

In that regard, we would refer to General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX), which considers the use of armed force by a State on the territory of another State that is outside the scope of agreement between the two countries to be an act of aggression. The same applies to the deployment of irregular armed groups in order to perform military acts in another State.

We welcome the efforts already taken and to be taken within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to deal with the current crisis and the establishment by the OSCE chairmanship of a contact group and a fact-finding mission. We call on the United Nations and OSCE to coordinate their efforts in order to remove the causes of tension and achieve a peaceful solution that preserves Ukraine's territorial integrity and enables a return to stability and calm in the country.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is deeply concerned about the current situation in Ukraine. We condemn the recent extreme and violent acts in that country. We have urged all sides in Ukraine to peacefully resolve their internal differences within a legal framework and conscientiously to protect the legitimate rights and interests of all peoples in Ukraine so as to restore normalcy to the country as soon as possible.

China consistently stands for the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of any country and of respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

There are reasons why the events in Ukraine have progressed to where they are today. China will follow closely the developments on the ground and calls on all sides to find a political solution through dialogue and negotiations on the basis of respect for international

law, the principles of international relations and the maintenance of regional peace and stability.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing this afternoon, and we welcome Ambassador Sergeyev's participation in this meeting.

The situation in Ukraine clearly continues to escalate. Tensions continue to rise, and the potential for military confrontation is obvious. Since the Council met on Saturday (see S/PV.7124), Russian military activity in Crimea has seriously intensified, and there are reports of more Russian troop deployments on Ukraine's eastern and southern borders, violations of Ukraine's airspace by Russian fighter planes, and Russian naval vessels blocking the exits of Sevastopol Bay in Crimea.

We are seriously concerned about the escalation of Russian military activity. Those actions, along with the decision by the Russian Parliament to authorize the use of force in Ukraine, are wholly unacceptable. Russia's actions are undermining the right of the Ukrainian people to choose their own future, and are also contrary to international law. They contravene the Charter of the United Nations. They also contravene agreements to which Russia itself is a party: the 1994 Budapest Memorandum; the 1975 Helsinki Final Act; and the 1997 bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Under those agreements, there is a specific commitment to respecting the territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as to non-intervention and to refraining from the use or threat of use of force.

The Australian Government, together with the broader international community, which is speaking loudly and with one voice, has urged Russia to stand down, withdraw its armed forces, abide by its international legal commitments and immediately take steps to reduce tensions. Russia must engage in direct dialogue with Ukraine in accordance with article 7 of its own Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership with Ukraine.

In the Council, Australia has already called for Russia to respect Ukraine's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we reiterate that call here today. We also reiterate our earlier call to not just avoid provocation, but to take proactive steps to de-escalate the crisis. We commend the continued restraint shown by Ukraine itself in the face of continued and very serious provocation. We support the efforts of the new Government of Ukraine to deal with the crisis and stabilize the situation in its country.

The international political engagement we have seen to date on this issue has been essential and of course must continue and increase. It is indicative of the level of concern regarding Russia's actions and the extent of the determination on the part of the international community to de-escalate the crisis. The international community and the Council must support all efforts towards de-escalation. That means exploring and promoting all opportunities for mediation and dialogue.

Australia would also strongly support the deployment of a full monitoring mission to Ukraine, and we are grateful to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for looking carefully at that possibility. That would be the best way to address Russia's stated concerns about minority rights, and we urge Russia to consider it. We welcome the news that the OSCE will begin deploying some initial monitors tonight.

We also welcome the engagement of the Secretary-General and the visit of Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson to Ukraine. We urge all parties to cooperate with the Deputy Secretary-General as he seeks to promote dialogue and cooperation and see for himself the facts on the ground. It is imperative that he be given access to all parts of Ukraine.

To conclude, the situation should obviously be resolved by peaceful means. There is no other option. As Australian Prime Minister Abbott said in the Australian Parliament yesterday, unprovoked aggression should have no place in our world. Russia should stand down and withdraw its forces from Ukraine in accordance with its obligations, and the people of Ukraine ought to be able to determine their future themselves.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We express our deep concern over the serious escalation of the crisis in Ukraine, which must be urgently reversed. We call for the greatest restraint and moderation.

We would once again reiterate, as we have stressed previously, the obligation to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, the parties involved must refrain from taking actions in contravention of the

Charter of the United Nations and international law, especially the use or threat of use of force.

The Budapest Memorandum is clear. It represents a commitment to respecting the independence, sovereignty and current borders of Ukraine and to refraining from the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine. Those obligations must be complied with.

The international community must continue to provide support to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis. In this context, we support the efforts in support of international mediation or other mechanisms, including those that could be used by regional organizations to help resolve the crisis. We welcome the decision of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to send observers to the eastern part of Ukraine. Chile supports the efforts of the Secretary-General, and we welcome in particular the mission led by the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, who is at this very moment in Kyiv. We also call for the Russian Federation to consider undertaking consultations in the framework of the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation in order to find a solution to the present crisis.

I wish to conclude by stressing the fact that it is up to the people of Ukraine to define their own destiny in an inclusive process that guarantees the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and respect for the rights of minorities.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would also like to thank Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing. Through him, we would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials for their efforts to promote a negotiated solution in the situation.

Argentina is following with deep concern the latest political developments in Ukraine, especially in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Argentina reaffirms the Security Council's responsibility to ensure that international peace and security are maintained within the framework of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In that vein, we recall the obligation that all States must settle their international disputes in a peaceful fashion in order not to endanger international peace and security, in accordance with the provisions of Article 33 of Chapter VI of the Charter, respecting the principles contained in Article 2 of Chapter I and recognizing the significant role that relevant regional organizations can play as provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We echo the call of the Secretary-General on all those involved to refrain from actions or statements that may escalate tensions and initiate constructive dialogue through peaceful means to find a way out of the current crisis. All political players and their international partners should heighten their efforts in order to find solutions through inclusive dialogue in which all social and political sectors of the various regions participate. We believe that it is indispensable for authorities who are responsible for leading in the transitional period to enjoy the support and participation of all political forces. We emphasize that it is the primary and unavoidable responsibility and obligation of the State to protect its population including all its ethnic and linguistic minorities. It is therefore essential that any action that can contribute to polarization, the rhetoric of confrontation and the heightening of tensions should be avoided.

Argentina is convinced of the need to work for a united Ukraine, honouring the principles of international law and with full and unconditional respect for human rights, which is the only way in which the Ukrainian people can find a democratic way out of the crisis presently affecting their country. The international community must focus its efforts on supporting such a process in order to cooperate and achieve political agreements that will put an end to the current crisis that Ukraine is facing.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): What began three months ago as a political protest is increasingly taking on a dimension that today can best be described as precarious. We call on all concerned to abide by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly Article 2, which calls on all States Members of the United Nations to settle their disputes by peaceful means and to refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity of any State.

The current situation in Ukraine, especially in Crimea, represents a clear and potent threat to international peace and security, and we would like to see a rapid de-escalation of tension and hostile rhetoric. The concerned parties must embrace dialogue as a means of resolving the crisis and facilitate an expeditious return to normalcy in Ukraine. The prerequisite for that is mediation, as other speakers before me have pointed out. We therefore call on the international community

and particularly those who can exert a constructive influence over the concerned parties to intensify efforts towards mediation in the crisis. We firmly believe that the use of preventive diplomacy tools at such a time represents the most expedient and effective option for bringing about a peaceful resolution.

We want to reiterate our call on all concerned to abide by the provisions of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, which guarantees the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We note that the provisions of the Memorandum call for the signatories to consult when a situation arises that raises questions concerning the commitments they undertook in the document. That clause is even more relevant now and indeed represents an opportunity to peacefully resolve the current crisis.

We are encouraged by indications that the Government of Ukraine is taking great strides to ensure greater political inclusiveness in the governance of the country. That, we believe, is a prudent way of addressing one of the underlying causes of the dispute and of ensuring an early return to peace and stability.

The call by the Secretary-General for cool heads to prevail remains relevant under the circumstances, and we urge all concerned to refrain from provocative action that could precipitate now and in the future unnecessary human suffering.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea remains deeply concerned over the situation in Ukraine, particularly the escalation of tensions in the Crimean region. Given the tense situation, we call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and surmount the crisis through dialogue. It is vital that the unity, independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Republic of Korea hopes that the situation in Ukraine will be settled in a peaceful manner. In that vein, we support the mediation efforts of the international community, particularly those of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We hope that the Deputy Secretary-General's visit to Ukraine will help to explore all possible responses to the situation.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): Chad is deeply concerned by the serious turn of the situation in Ukraine despite the many appeals of the international community for a de-escalation, calm and dialogue. Chad believes that any conflict between States Members of the United Nations should find a peaceful solution within the framework United Nations Charter and in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, non-use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes.

Given the deteriorating situation in Ukraine, Chad reiterates its appeal for restraint and calm and calls upon the international community to undertake a mediation in order to bring about a dialogue between the parties. In that regard, Chad supports all mediation efforts of the international community seeking to bring the parties concerned to settle their differences in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the commitments under the various agreements.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Luxembourg.

Luxembourg is deeply concerned about the recent developments in Ukraine, in particular in Crimea. Our position is reflected in the conclusion that the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union has just adopted today during an urgently convened meeting. We strongly condemn the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by Russian armed forces and the decision taken last Saturday by Russia's Federation Council to authorize the deployment of Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine.

Those actions are a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. I would like to echo the appeal of the European Union to Russia to withdraw its armed forces without delay in order to meet its obligations under the 28 May 1997 Agreement between Russia and Ukraine on the Status and Conditions of the Presence of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on the Territory of Ukraine.

The crisis must be resolved peacefully. A first critical step would be for Russia to accept Ukraine's offer to hold consultations without delay, as provided for in the Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with the Republic of Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, signed 5 December 1994 by Ukraine, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, and under the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership, signed on 31 May 1997 between Russia and Ukraine.

We would like to believe that it is still pssible to avoid the worst. Owing to its history, unfortunately, Luxembourg is well placed to understand the threats

that a military escalation poses to the peace and security of Ukraine and the region. We must therefore do our utmost to start a de-escalation of the situation through specific actions. We resolutely support the ongoing efforts within the United Nations, in particular the good offices role of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who took the decision to dispatch the Deputy Secretary-General to Ukraine.

The principles of the United Nations and the very raison d'être of the United Nations are at stake. We call on the entire international community to support the efforts of the United Nations, together with those of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and the European Union, to reach a political settlement of the crisis with the parties concerned. We welcome the preparations under way with a view to establishing an OSCE observer mission to impartially assess the situation on the ground.

A lasting political solution to the Ukrainian crisis also requires an inclusive political dialogue, taking into account the diversity of Ukrainian society, the aspirations of all Ukrainians and the need to respect the rights of all Ukrainians. Luxembourg supports the new Government and Parliament of Ukraine, which have taken steps to promote that inclusive political dialogue. We encourage the Ukrainian authorities to appeal to the expertise of the Council of Europe and the OSCE, in particular with regard to the protection of the rights of minorities.

In conclusion, we welcome the restraint shown by the Ukrainian authorities in the face of the crisis, in particular in Crimea. It is vital for all parties to respect the unity, territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Ukraine.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Madam President, and all members of the Security Council for having given me the floor and for your important remarks, where I heard broad support for my country. Ukraine counts greatly on the Security Council to exert all possible efforts at the international level in order to guarantee the protection of the Ukrainian people, the sovereignty of my country and its territorial integrity.

(*spoke in English*)

At the beginning of this meeting, we listened to the briefing of the representative of the Russian Federation with great attention. Unfortunately, we have still not received any compelling answer to the simple question as to why the military forces of the Russian Federation are illegally occupying the Crimea and brutally violating international law and bilateral agreements. I would like to recall that, according to the Budapest Memorandum on security assurances signed in 1994 between Ukraine and guarantor States, including Russia itself, my country has given up its nuclear arsenal to Russia, while Russia, inter alia, was obliged to refrain from the threat of or use of threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine. In that regard, I want to underline that with this aggression, the Russian Federation is specifically undermining the regime of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in general.

I wish to brief the Council on the most recent developments on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine. As of today, beginning from 24 February, approximately 16,000 Russian troops have been deployed in Crimea by military ships, helicopters and cargo aeroplanes from the neighbouring territory of the Russian Federation. The Russian troops keep making attempts to seize, block and control Ukraine's crucial governmental and military entities in Crimea — the Parliament of Crimea, all civil and military airports, means of communication, radio stations, customs services, military and coastguard bases and the headquarters of Ukraine's navy in Crimea. All main roads are blocked.

The build-up of Russian Federation troops and military equipment along the eastern border of Ukraine clearly indicates Russia's preparation for a possible military intervention in Ukraine — the other parts of our country. So far, the Ukrainian armed forces have exercised restraint and refrained from active resistance to the aggression, although they are in full operational readiness.

The Russian Federation is performing active information and psychological operations in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, as well as in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine. Those are aimed at discrediting the legitimate authorities of Ukraine and misleading public opinion by calling the Russian intervention a peacekeeping operation.

The Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine announced today information about possible provocative acts by the Russian side on the territory of Crimea. Tonight, unknown armed persons are planning to attack and possibly kill Russian soldiers, presenting it as if the attack were committed by Ukraine from within. That is going to be used as a pretext for the ongoing armed intervention by Russia against Ukraine.

The Russian Federation is concerned about the human rights and freedoms of the ethnic Russians on the territory of Ukraine. I would like to inform the Council that it is the obligation of our Government and people to care about that. We do not need external help. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs agreed with the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to provide an observer mission in Crimea.

Once again, we call upon Security Council members to authorize an international mediation and monitoring mission to Crimea to also monitor the situation with regard to the human rights of ethnic Russian and other ethnic groups and the so-called Russian-speaking population. I, too, am a Russian-speaking person but I do not need any support. My appeal to the Russian Federation is that it demonstrate that it is still a respectful permanent member of the Security Council. It should not undermine the authority of, and confidence in, this universal body.

I know that in the media there are some Russian companies and one Ukrainian television station. Therefore, with the Council's permission, I will continue in Russian.

(*spoke in Russian*)

I would like to congratulate all Orthodox Christians on the beginning of Lent and to call on all of Russia's Christians and their leaders to seek peace. Do not provoke God's wrath. Come to your senses. Pray for us and hear us.

Unfortunately, the representative of the Russian Federation has attempted to explain the presence of Russian troops in Crimea by saying they are serving as peacekeepers. As we have heard from many who spoke today, those acts are seen as aggression and a provocation of a large-scale armed conflict in Ukraine. That is unacceptable for a State that is one of the guarantors of our sovereignty and territorial integrity under the Budapest Memorandum — and, moreover, for a permanent member of the Security Council, which shares with other Member States the very important function of supporting peace and stability throughout the world. None of that representative's reasoning about the legitimacy of the invasion of Ukraine can be condoned from the standpoint of the Charter of the United Nations. All Russia's arguments with regard to the protection of the Russian population, for example, which supposedly condone military intervention, are part of an issue that is totally within the national purview of the Ukrainian Government and its citizens and should be carried out under our Constitution. All citizens, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality, have equal rights. Under our Constitution, only the Ukrainian Parliament can take those decisions. Do we need military assistance to deal with those humanitarian questions? I have already said that we do not need that type of assistance.

The representative of the Russian Federation continues to refer to the agreement of 21 February as the basis for a settlement of the crisis in Ukraine. We are very surprised by such reasoning. The Russian side, which participated in the mediation talks in reaching that agreement, together with our European partners, refrained from signing the agreement and did not even recognize it as such. Moreover, in the opinion of the Russian representative, how could it be implemented in the context that he is talking about, if one of the major players — former President Yanukovych — left the capital and in fact refused to implement his constitutional functions?

The Russian representative continues to call what happened in Ukraine a coup d'état. In the democratic world, there is a more precise definition. What took place was a revolution of dignity.

We have different understandings about human rights. In November 2013, people of all nationalities protested in the streets without any party officials instructing them and without any pressure from the West — contrary to what the Russian representative asserted. People went out to defend their right to a life of dignity against a wretched, corrupt system that had brought about extreme poverty to mining regions in the east and rural areas of the centre and south of the country, as well as unemployment in the west. Meanwhile, as the entire world saw on television, the relatives of former President Yanukovych, who the Russian representative is defending, lived in luxury.

The Russian representative reiterated today what was already said in a statement by Minister Lavrov,

namely, that the former authorities used absolutely legitimate means in curbing unrest. That means that the peaceful student protesters who were brutally beaten by the police on the night of 30 November and on 1 December, whose rights were violated, now stand accused of violating rights. So, while in fact the police beat them, now it seems that the protesters were the ones at fault. And thus it was the protesters who brought repressive laws to Parliament limiting their constitutional rights of freedom of speech and association and laws curbing the rights of the mass media and the freedom of expression — laws that Yanukovych was forced to nullify in the face of pressure from public opinion.

I think the Russian representative is saying that something is wrong in his country. I am sorry that he told an untruth about the Church. All denominations have supported the people, including the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is canonically related to the Moscow Patriarchate. The highest official of the Ukranian Church has called on Russian Orthodox Christians to pause and pray for Ukraine, but not to get ready to kill Ukranians.

The Russian side justified its decision to carry out a military intervention in Ukraine by saying that the Prime Minister of Crimea, Mr. Aksyonov, had requested it. His appointment runs counter to the Constitution. He is not a legitimate leader of the administrative territory of Ukraine.

Allow me to recall that Ukraine is a unified State, and Crimea, in line with its powers, is not a member of the Federation. Without the central Government's authorization for troops to come in from Russia, we see it as an unauthorized act of aggression. Even in Crimea it is not supported by many of the people.

Therefore, in accordance with the call by the Secretary-General, the people of the east were brought into the Government's work. Four ministers in Ukraine's current Cabinet were born in Russia, while several governors and territorial leaders in the eastern regions are also Russian-speaking.

In spite of the economic difficulties in the country, the Government of Ukraine is continuing to provide assistance to Crimea. The National Bank of Ukraine provided support to the Crimean bank in the amount of 400 million hryvnias.

Unfortunately, I must note an unfair game played by Russia in the area of misinformation, which is also contributing to the destabilization of our country. Many examples have been given in the past few days. I do not wish to repeat them. However, we would like to take the opportunity afforded by this meeting to once again call on our Russian partners to stop spreading false information.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you, Madam President, and to all members of the Security Council, in particular those who expressed support for Ukraine, who support the imperative to resolve all the problems via diplomatic and political means and to stop the aggression.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to take the floor again to make an additional statement. I give him the floor.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to welcome my Ukrainian colleague, Mr. Sergeyev, with whom I have been working for quite some time here at the United Nations. I congratulate him on the fact that today he spoke not only in English and French, but also in Russian. It was the first speech that I can recall him delivering in Russian. I should like to tell him, better late than never! I hope we will hear other speeches from my Ukrainian colleague in Russian, although, as we heard, he is also very competent in English and French.

In the course of the statements made by Mr. Sergeyev and other colleagues, I heard a number of strange and even surprising claims. I will make some comments on those. First, the statements made by my Ukrainian, French and British colleagues, if I remember correctly, included the claim that Russia is seeking to exert pressure on Ukrainian democracy. But can a forcible takeover be called democracy? What we are saying is that there must be a normal constitutional process that takes the interests of all regions and all people in Ukraine into account. Is that not democracy? We are calling for democracy, but others are trying to make it seem that what we are calling for is not democracy.

Mr. Sergeyev brought up the very dramatic and tragic events of the past three months, for which we have expressed our great sympathy. There is no doubt about that. There should be no doubt about whether Russia understands that the basis of the political crisis is dissatisfaction on the part of the masses with

Mr. Yanukovych's actions as President. But let us be honest about one thing — somewhere along the way, perhaps after the break-up of the demonstrations that was mentioned, laws were adopted under Yanukovych. These laws were repeatedly criticized, although such laws exist in many other countries. There was even a point at which one could not cross the road during a demonstration. Such measures have been taken in many countries. Under French law, in 2009 if I am not mistaken, it was forbidden to wear a mask on the street during a peaceful political demonstration. There may be some other currents at play, but it seems that many elements under discussion also exist in normal democratic countries.

That is not the important issue; it is a matter of principle at play here. Why have my colleagues decided that what we have in Ukraine now is democratic governance? As Ambassador Sergeyev noted, we can all recall what happened in 1917, when a democratic revolution was followed by dictatorship. We remember that all too well. We have the feeling that, in essence, the Kyiv Government comprises nationalist radicals. They could be replaced by others who might be more presentable to the West, but what motivates them are their backers — the ones who brought them to power.

Let us not be fooled into believing that any change of Government, especially if it is violent, leads to democracy. Some of our western colleagues seem to think that this is the case. We would like to see the process under way in Ukraine lead to the establishment of genuine democracy in that country.

My colleague from the United States said that there is a need to respect the Constitution of Ukraine. We believe that that is indeed important. I am trying to imagine what would happen if, while President Obama was in California, Mitt Romney turned up at the White House and the United States Congress, in one House of which there is currently a Republic majority, all of a sudden voted to impeach President Obama. How would United States public opinion react to that? Would that be a manifestation of democracy? That is exactly what happened in Ukraine. Why did Mr. Yanukovich leave? He was scared into leaving Kyiv for Kharkiv. He was intimidated into signing the agreement of 21 February. He was threatened that the presidential residence would be stormed if the premises were not vacated by 10 a.m.. That is not democracy. That is not respect for the Constitution.

The situation in Crimea is very complex. The Autonomous Republic of Crimea enjoys special status. There was concern that the violent actions in Kyiv would lead to a similar violent capture of the Administration there. Someone came to power in Crimea and took vigorous actions. He subordinated himself to all power structures.

Some wish to make it seem that there are only Russian armed forces in Crimea, but there are also the Ukrainian armed forces who have sworn allegiance to the new authorities in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea — for example, the Commander of the Ukrainian Fleet, which is also based there; he too has sworn allegiance to the new authorities. There are also a number of self-defence militias, which were created when the Crimean people were afraid that force would be used due to the movement of armed contingents from Kyiv. These people were armed and promised to look for their so-called friends there — that is, militants to restore the appropriate Government.

Then there is the presence of the Black Sea fleet. The numbers are interesting. The Ukrainian representative said that there are some 16,000 military personnel of the Russian Black Sea fleet, but under our agreement up to 25,000 Russian troops can be stationed there. They are there to protect sites and prevent extremists from taking actions that could harm civilians or endanger their lives and health. Perhaps our Ukrainian colleague views this as excessive, but I fully agree with the authorities of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

I was also surprised to hear Ambassador Power state that all of these concerns are fabricated. That claim truly surprises me. I have the impression that Ms. Power is taking her information from United States television. Well, if she gets all her information from United States television alone, then of course everything in Ukraine must seem just wonderful. The wave of democracy there was interrupted only when the bad guy Yanukovych ran away.

There was an attempt to take over the Kyiv Pechorska Lavra, which is as dear to me as it is to Ambassador Sergeyev — perhaps even more. I am not from Ukraine; I am from Russia. From the reports of the American Ambassador and our own information, I am sure that our media, like that of many other countries, has portrayed events quite differently. What about the wave of violence that swept through western and central Ukraine? What about the armed attacks

against administrative buildings? What about the municipal leaders who were dragged from their offices, tied to pillars and mocked? Was that democracy? Is that a normal political process? Would we see someone dragged out like that in Chicago or in Bordeaux, for example? I do not think so. I do not think we would deem such actions admissible in any democratic country.

What, then, are we to make of the events in Kyiv? Was that merely a made-up concern? Attempts to take over administrative buildings in almost all cities in eastern and southern Ukraine were not made up. An armed group invaded and tried to remove the Government and to set up its own undemocratic and illegitimate authority.

I shall now turn to one of the key points I would like to highlight. It is not only we who are concerned. It is not important that we hold such concern. This concern is shared naturally by people living in southern and eastern Ukraine.

I now return to a point on which Ambassador Sergeyev knows I am right. As I have already mentioned, unfortunately the right-wing forces in Ukraine are very strong. They cannot stand Russian citizens or ethnic Russians. Let us recall how their leaders aligned with Bandera and Shukhevych, who fought under Hitler's banner against the Soviet Union's Red Army component of the anti-Hitler coalition. Those who share their ideology are unfortunately very close to the Ukranian authorities; in fact, they carry them on their shoulders. Can one therefore not find it justifiable or imaginable that people living there would have concerns — millions of people, with 1.5 million of them in Crimea.

The key issue here is, does anyone really think that Russia could allow a repeat of what happened there in central and eastern Ukraine, where millions of Russians live? I would recall that, years ago, the United States took over Grenada. President Reagan said that they were defending American citizens who resided there. That was 1,000 people, and there was no threat to those citizens from Grenada. We have millions living there. They have concerns.

Our colleagues have referred to international institutions — the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations. Granted, those institutions might be used. We do not deny that. But those of us working at the United Nations understand very well what international institutions are like. In Kosovo there were not just institutions, but deployed NATO forces. What did they do in 2004 to stop the repression and attacks that took place there, which forced many thousands of Serbs to leave the area? Nothing was done. Some here have called for an OSCE observer mission to be sent to Ukraine. Do they know what nationalist radicals think of such a mission? They will not even hear of it. Also, it will take months to make the preparations for such a mission, so who knows what could happen there in the meantime?

Another very important point that I want to address is the following. We called this meeting it. No one should think that we called it to provide a fuller picture of what is really happening from our view point. The two previous meetings were somewhat spontaneous, it is true. I would like to repeat that a decision by our President, which was authorized by the Federation Council, to deploy Russian armed forces on the territory of Ukraine has not yet been taken. And the fact that we are holding this meeting does not mean that such a decision will be taken in the near future.

However, in order to avert something we all want to prevent, it is essential to bring home to those who happen to be in power in Kyiv and who control the situation in vast areas of Ukraine, as well as those who support them and influence them, that there should be no continuation of a policy of faits accompli and the seizure of power by force.

We talked about defensive language rights. Yes, a lot of work will have to be done there, with the possible participation of international agencies. But let us understand one thing now: we must all refrain from making any plans for, or falling back on the habit of, violently imposing authority or a philosophy, culture or world view on other people. That is undemocratic and could have very dangerous consequences in Ukraine.

On a more practical matter, one of my colleagues said that we cannot talk about the agreement of 21 February because Yanukovych left. Well, so what? The point is that our task is not to return Yanukovych to power. Is it not understood that Yanukovych will never return to power, that he will never go back to his residence in Kyiv and never rule the State — although we continue to consider him the legitimate President of Ukraine at present, for the reasons I have stated. The point is that this is not a matter of Yanukovych or no Yanukovych. The point is that democratic parameters for resolving the crisis in Ukraine are set out in the agreement. This is not about returning to one law out

of the blue; there should be constitutional reform. They have been constantly changing the laws in Ukraine for the past 15 years, which may be the reason for the political turmoil. There should be a process between the different regions and political forces.

The Party of Regions has been scared off, and so they think it no longer exists. But it exists. It has huge support in the western part of the country, which is Ukraine's main industrial centre.

That is what we are talking about. That is what should be done, in addition to giving up force as a way of solving problems.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Power (United States of America): In response to my Russian colleague's comments, I would like to make a couple of points. First, I would like to address his point about the legitimacy of President Yanukovych and his point about the February 21 agreement, which he has made several times.

To be clear, we commend the work done by France, Germany and Poland to mediate and negotiate that agreement, with Russia very much in observance. We would have been prepared to support the completion of that agreement. Under its terms, President Yanukovych had 24 hours to sign the first piece of action pursued in the Rada: the changing of the Constitution pursuant to the 21 February agreement. Not only did President Yanukovych not sign it but, as my Russian colleague reminds us, he left the city. Indeed he fled the city. He packed up himself and his family and he left the seat of the presidency vacant for two days while his country was in crisis. He also left vast evidence of corruption and vast evidence of the amounts that he had stolen from the Ukrainian people. In that context, with 371 votes, the democratically elected Rada voted Yanukovych out of office, with his own party turning against him. That is the history.

With respect to the present, what we have heard today — with the exception of one member of the Security Council, namely, the Russian Federation — is overwhelming support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and for peaceful dialogue. There are so many options available to Russia to safeguard the rights of ethnic Russians and to address the concerns that have been raised: so many options short of military action. Therefore, the very simple questions for Russia today are the following. Why not support international mediation? Why is that not part of their remarks today? Why not support an observer mission? Why not engage directly with the Ukrainian authorities who want to resolve the crisis peacefully? Why not pull back their forces instead of sending more? Why not?

When military intervention in the face of a crisis like this is the first resort, it is hard to avoid concluding that Russia does not want peace and does not want a diplomatic solution. Why choose military action when the consequences could be devastating? Only someone who fears the truth would be fearful of monitors who are deployed for the specific purpose of identifying and reporting the truth. That is all.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of France has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): For four and a half years I have had the honour to serve on the Security Council. And for four and a half years I have had the honour of working with the representative of the Russian Federation. In that time, I have heard the representative of the Russian Federation invoke whenever possible the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another country. As soon as we talk about human rights in a given country, the representative of the Russian Federation says that there should be absolutely no interference in the domestic affairs of another country. I have just heard a statement that is nothing more than pure interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine. I am sorry to have to recall that there should be some sort of coherence in the foreign policies that we should be aspiring to. Everything that the representative of the Russian Federation has just said is interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine.

Secondly, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation has told us that the decision for the Russian armed forces to enter Ukraine has not yet been taken. Please, everyone knows that the Russian army is controlling the Republic of Crimea. That is a fact. Of course they had no need to enter Ukraine, since they were already were there. At this hour, the Russian army is occupying Ukraine. That is a fact. The Internet and television do exist, and Russian soldiers are not even hiding the fact that they are occupying Ukraine and surrounding the army bases of the Ukrainian army.

Thirdly, there is a long-standing habit of always calling one's opponent a Nazi before getting rid of

him. The Soviets were good at that. No — not all the demonstrators who were in the streets in Kyiv were Nazis, and for the most part they were not from the far right or radical nationalists. If members of the Council need evidence of that, it is quite simple. Elections can be held on 25 May under international supervision — for example, under the supervision of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Let the Ukrainians vote. They will decide, under OSCE monitoring, what future they want.

Finally, I am very touched by the Russian Federation's attachment to the 21 February agreement, which the Russian Federation had previously rejected. I repeat — it is an agreement that the Russian Federation had refused to endorse and that it now invokes incessantly. It is better to find the path of wisdom late than never.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Perhaps I should not comment on such trivial things, but the statement made by my colleague Ms. Power made it sound as if we oppose something that we do not oppose. We are not excluding the role of some international bodies, but I explained why that approach might not be enough.

More importantly, I would like to ask my French colleague not to engage in hyperbole. We do not need hyperbole. Furthermore, I did not say that the majority of those who protested in the streets of Kyiv were radical nationalists. I did not say that. The minority of them may have been, but the problem is that they were the ones who not nly called the tune but also played along with the band. They have now taken over Government authority in Kyiv and are sending people to east and southern Ukraine and to the territory of Crimea.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the United Kingdom has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I do not want to prolong today's debate but I must take issue with some of the things that the Russian ambassador has said.

Let us be clear about the facts of what has happened in Crimea. The Russian forces have forcibly taken over military and civilian airports and infrastructure. They have set up roadblocks and pressured Ukrainian military leaders to defect. They have given other Ukrainian units ultimatums to surrender. They have blocked Ukrainian ports and vastly increased their military forces all along the Russian-Ukrainian border.

There is no justification for that military action in international law or in the Agreement between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the Status and Conditions of Presence of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation in the Territory of Ukraine, as article 6 of that Agreement sets forth very clearly: "Military formations shall respect the sovereignty of Ukraine, shall abide by Ukrainian laws and shall not interfere in the internal affairs of Ukraine." What part of that Agreement justifies the military action that we have seen Russian taking in Crimea?

My Russian colleague has said just now that the Russian Federation is not against the idea of an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe monitoring mission to eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Can he now confirm therefore that the Russian Federation accepts the deployment of such a mission in the next few days?

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make further statement.

Mr. Churkin (*spoke in Russian*): We are not sitting with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I cannot talk about the OSCE. We are not talking about the OSCE. It has its own functions. We supported Mr. Eliasson's mission to Ukraine. As for an OSCE mission, that has to be discussed. I support what Mr. Sergeyev said early to the effect that there is too much disinformation and too many statements, particularly those that are not rooted in reality. Much of what Sir Mark Lyall Grant said abou what is going on in Crimea is just not in line with reality.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine) (*spoke in Russian*): I am speaking in Russian in order to be properly understood. I support what Ambassador Churkin said with regard to the need to speak openly and be extremely honest. I just want to clarify a few issues he raised in his statement. I will be clear.

First, as to the occupation or threat of occupation of the Pechersk Lavra monastery in Kyiv, which is in canonical relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate,

when the unrest began we received information that there might be some kind of provocation against the monastery. The monastery issued a statement that same day and repeated it the next day to the effect that the exterior of the monastery was being guarded by ordinary people from the Maidan to prevent any provocation. That is the entire answer. The demonstrators were defending the monastery from possible provocations.

As to the Black Sea fleet, I have something to add. Our Agreement provides for a numerical strength for the Black Sea fleet of 11,000 people, including about 2,000 marines and 5,300 other military from the Russian armed forces. Let us pay close attention — in December 2013, our Ministry was notified by the Russian side that the Black Sea fleet would be maintained at a numerical strength of 11,000.

I would now like to go back to statement made by the representative of Jordan. He quoted the annex of General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX), in which the concept of aggression is defined. Article 3 of the annex contains a non-exhaustive list of what would qualify as an act of aggression. The list provides for the eventuality that if within the territory of a State — for example, Ukraine — the armed forces of another State — for example, Russia, and in this case the Black Sea fleet — are present with the agreement of the receiving State, and the permitted number and location of the troops are specified, and there is a violation of the specified number and location of troops without the agreement of the receiving country, that is an act of aggression. In that regard, I am not even referring to the number of military forces that infringed the airspace of Ukraine, namely, M-14 combat helicopters that were not part of the Black Sea fleet, or the many other transport aircraft that have infringed our airspace. There has thus been an increase in the number of Russian military within our territory, in violation of all of our agreements. That is aggression.

There has been much speculation about language. I and my Administration have explained to the press and to many of my colleagues that the first law upon Ukraine's independence, promulgated in 1992, was the law on national minorities, which guaranteed equal rights and protection of the national interests of all ethnic groups, including linguistic minorities. In principle, the substantive law that was adopted in 2012 under pressure by the former Ukrainian Government did not take into account more than 2,000 amendments, and the opposition did not participate in the vote.

We did not need that legislation because it was enough to have the 1992 law and the Constitution. I would recall that when Ukraine went to the Council of Europe, it took on an obligation to sign and to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, not languages of minorities but minority languages. The former Governments redid the Charter, saying that it should apply not only to languages such as Crimean Tartar, Karaim and others that need to be protected, but to all languages of national minorities that are protected by law. We have therefore now got rid of that law. The Government said that the Parliament would once again consider the ratification of the Charter, which we undertook to ratify. We signed and ratified it. Incidentally, to date, the Russian Federation has not ratified the Charter. But we are ratifying it. For languages that do not have a territory and have no official definition, we will defend those languages that would disappear because there are not many people who speak them.

With regard to the Party of Regions, unfortunately an untruth was said. The Party of Regions, the former ruling party, was a large faction of the current Parliament. Moreover, one of the leaders of that faction, Mr. Tygipko, said that he would run for President. No one heard that. The ruling party called Mr. Yanukovych what he is, that is, a coward and a traitor. It was not a comment about the Parliament. The Parliament was elected legally for a long time, not in a revolutionary way. It has all the power that it needs to appoint the Government. It has the full range of powers to conduct elections. Today, it was announced there would be presidential elections on 25 May. Let us therefore give that an opportunity to work and for us to learn how to live together and how to govern.

I agree that we need assistance so that we can get past this crisis, which has been going on for years, and help the country to build its future in such a way that people will not be ashamed to live there. We need that assistance in order to form a civil society and, of course, we invite all to come and help and to see how we are doing that but not to bother us when we do not ask for it.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.